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ABSTRACT

The 1984 legislation for public funding of Catholic schools in Ontario exposed two primary conflicting values held by different groups. An analysis of policy change in terms of value conflict, and an examination of the consequences for organizational structure and administrative practice are the themes of this paper. The context in which the change occurred is examined from the provincial, local school board, and central government levels. Newspaper coverage, supplemented by other documents and informal interviews, is the major data source. The issue of church-state separation is based on conflict between religious, political, and educational values. Rational models for change are therefore inapplicable. The change to two separate, parallel publicly funded educational systems can be viewed as the result of an exercise in political power. (40 references) (LMI)

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Education and Religious War in Ontario

Edward S. Hickcox

April 1990

Every time in history when religion and politics were mixed, there has been bloodshed, and I defy a student of history to give one instance where that has not been true. (George Drew campaigning for the Conservatives in Ontario in 1936, reported in the Toronto Globe and Mail, July 13, 1985, p. 5)

The Announcement

On June 12, 1984, William G. Davis, the Premier of Ontario, in a speech not longer than eighteen minutes, announced in the Provincial Parliament that legislation would be put forward by the government giving Roman Catholic Separate School Boards full funding support through Grade 13. He estimated that the cost of implementing this program would be $80 million over a two year period. Previously, since Confederation and before, Catholic schools had been funded through primary school and since the 1960's through Grade 10. Separate School Boards which operated programs in Grades 11, 12, and 13 had to operate them as private schools, with costs carried by privately collected tuition paid by parents and by support from the Roman Catholic Church. (Davis, W.G., 1984)

Mr. Davis received a standing ovation from members of all three political parties (Globe and Mail, 1984a). That such a controversial announcement would receive this sort of tri-partisan response is unusual in itself, although it is clear enough that the Government was effecting a sudden policy shift which caught the opposition parties off guard. What none of the parties sensed on June 12 was the extent of public reaction to the announcement. The issue dominated Ontario educational politics for several years.

This dramatic announcement of a fundamental shift in government policy unleased a flood of angry reaction and emotional outbursts from many segments of society in Ontario. Deep seated beliefs about religion and about religion in education

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were brought to the surface, ressurected, as it were, from earlier times when matters of faith divided groups of people in such a way that the establishment and maintenance of Canada as a country was in question. In 1984, Ontario appeared to be in the middle of a religious war, brought on by Mr. Davis' action. Even in 1990, the struggle continues, although the rhetoric and the dramatic flourishes have diminished.

Among the questions arising out of the events in Ontario since 1984 relative to this government initiative are ones having to do with the impact on the delivery of education in the Province. A basic shift in the balance of power among provincial level educational organizations has occurred. New alliances of strange bedfellows have sprung up. At least one provincial organization of administrators has ceased to exist as a result, in large measure, of the extension[1] of funding to separate schools. On the provincial level there has been a structural realignment. It is not clear yet what the impact at the school level has been in a general sense, although a multitude of individual crises have been recorded.

On a deeper, and probably more interesting, level, questions arise about what happens in education when strongly held values, Level 1 values in Chris Hodgkinson's (Hodgkinson, 1983, p. 38) terms, come in conflict. How are such value conflicts resolved? What are the consequences, both manifest and latent, of the exercise of political power in the name of a value not universally held?

Treatment and Setting

The intent of the chapter is to begin to understand this dramatic educational change in Ontario in terms of its impact on the operation of schools and in terms of its relation to educational change in general. It begins with a discussion of the context within which the change occurred. It describes some of the main events and activities associated with the change. It examines the behaviour of various significant actors in the change and of various educational organizations. And finally, it attempts to analyze the change in terms of the clash of values involved and in terms of the immediate effect, at

[1] In Ontario, and in Canada, the Constitution provides for public funding of public schools and for schools run by Roman Catholics, schools known as separate schools. "Extension" is the term used by public school supporters to describe the funding change. Separate school supporters use the term "completion," referring to the idea of "completing" education to the end of secondary school in separate schools.

least, on the structure of organizations at the provincial level and on the practice of administration within that structure.

The major data source for the chapter is newspaper coverage provided by the Toronto Globe and Mail. There were several reasons for this. One was that library sources at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, where the original version was prepared, had no holdings of papers and reports produced in connection with the initiative with one exception . (Macdonald Commission, 1985) No general analyses were discovered in the library of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in Toronto. A second reason was the amount of media coverage of the events. From 1984 to 1988, there were 207 news stories and features in the Globe and Mail about issues surrounding the changes. Of these stories, 165 appeared from June 1984 through December 1985, a near deluge of reporting for a single story. And the Globe and Mail, since it has more of national stance than other Ontario newspapers, probably had less coverage overall than other papers. A quick look at the listings for the Toronto Star, the paper with the largest circulation in Ontario, indicates even more coverage. The Globe also assigned one of its top reporters, Robert Matas, to cover the story, and he followed it from beginning to end.

Other sources of information include some papers and reports discovered in Ontario, plus informal conversations between the author and participants in the various events. In fact, the author himself played a minor role as advisor to the principal administrator's organization in the Province as it attempted to establish policy positions on various issues.

Ontario, like the other jurisdictions examined in this book, has had its share of incremental changes in education in recent years. In the late 60's, a comprehensive Commission report, known as the Hall-Dennis Report (Living and Learning, 1968) nudged the educational system in the Province along progressive lines, with the emphasis on meeting the needs of children, on meeting individual needs, on process over content, and on making the child happy in school. The pendulum has swung back within the past three years with a government sponsored study known as the Radwanski Report suggesting a move toward the basics, away from streaming, and away from an emphasis on process in favour of product. Another indicator of a return to a more conservative stance is the government move toward outcome based evaluation in the form of the

utilization of test scores on standardized tests administered to students at various grade levels.

A major change relative to French language education has been evolving over the past three years.[2] In the Ottawa area, for example, a new French school board[3] has been created. New legislation mandates a French presence on school boards with power to influence important educational decisions involving financial allocation, personnel appointments and the like. Within the past five years, a major revamping of secondary education has been accomplished, involving a decrease in the years of schooling, an increase in the number of required courses, and other changes. An influx of immigrants into urban areas has spawned a variety of multicultural programs in schools. And there have been efforts to make advances in cooperative education and vocational education.

These initiatives were all incremental changes in that they were establishment initiated. Generally, they did not involve clashes of fundamental values, but were reflective of shifts in what the educational public saw as important, i.e. a move toward the basics and toward outcome based evaluation.

The separate school funding initiative, however, is a change of a different order, involving a unilateral challenge to a long-established way of supporting education in the Province. On the surface, it is a unilateral change. As such it is an interesting event to analyze, and it raises interesting questions about the exercise of power, about democracy, and about the nature of our society. The end issue for this, and other kinds of changes, is whether it will make any difference in what our children are like and in what they know. Most educational changes are not reforms because they have little impact on what happens to the average child. They are simply changes. The separate school funding initiative may affect the way children are taught to think and what they are taught to think about. On the other hand, it may not have as much effect as the television program, **Miami Vice.**

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[2]Canada is officially bi-lingual, French and English. About one third of the population is French speaking, with the majority of French speakers living in the province of Quebec. About 500,000 francophones live in Ontario, clustered mainly in the northern and eastern regions of the province.

[3] In Canada, local school systems are administered by school boards, consisting of locally elected trustees with considerable powers in matters of personnel, curriculum and finance.

The Context

Geographically, Ontario is huge, extending from the Quebec border in the east all the way to the Manitoba border in the west, a distance of more than 1600 kilometers. It extends more than 1500 kilometers to the north, although most of the population is strung out along the U.S. border from Niagara Falls to Cornwall, and in the Vancouver area of British Columbia close to the U.S. state of Washington. More than three million of Ontario's eight and a half million people live in the Toronto metropolitan area which is the largest business and financial centre in Canada. About 38% of the population is Roman Catholic. In 1988, Ontario had 1,825,000 students in elementary and secondary schools. An additional 61,878 students attended private schools which did not receive any public funding.

A combination of factors over the past hundred years has made Ontario a wealthy province relative to the other provinces of Canada. In addition to its concentration of business, industry, and financial institutions, it is a cultural centre. It is politically powerful in national affairs. The total education budget in 1989 was about $8 billion for elementary, secondary, and post secondary education.

Important for this discussion is that the Conservatives,[4] until 1985, had been in power for forty-two years in the Province. Mr. Davis had been premier since 1971. Several months after the 1984 announcement, he also announced he was retiring from active politics. His successor, Frank Miller, was unable to maintain the traditional Conservative majority and eventually lost power (for reasons that will come clear later in this chapter) when the Liberals and the NDP combined to form a minority government. By 1986, the Liberals had triumphed in a landslide election, and the Conservatives for the first time in the memory of most of the population were relegated to an opposition role.

The shape of the educational system in Ontario was drawn by a singular individual, Egerton Ryerson, Ontario's first superintendent of education, who installed a highly centralized system for the administration of education in the 19th century (Fleming, 1971, p. 2). Presuming that the quality of education would be difficult to

[4]There are three major political parties in Ontario: the Progressive-Conservatives, the Liberals, and the New Democratic Party (NDP). The NDP has never held power in the Province.

control, given the vast distances in the Province, he instituted an inspectorial system for the administration of schools which, in some forms, has persisted to this day. Inspectors, provincially employed, had enormous powers to evaluate both programs and people in all areas of the Province. And they did evaluate. The government offices in Toronto mandated the curriculum to a large extent and approved appointments and expenditures.

School boards in Ontario are part of the tradition of local control of education existing in Canada and the United States. Central authorities in Ontario, however, have retained a large measure of power over the delivery of educational services relative to the power of the school boards. A striking contrast can be seen in the United States, particularly in the New England states, where the small towns so characteristic of that region pay relatively scant attention to directives from the State Education Departments. The spirit of individualism and independence is pervasive.

Since 1969, Ontario school districts have been organized into county wide systems or into systems defined by the boundaries of large metropolitan areas. These school districts are large by comparison with those in most other parts of the country. A district of less than 10,000 students is considered small. At least twenty-five school districts have pupil populations of over twenty-five thousand students. One, the Metropolitan Separate Board, has over 100,000 students. Each district has an elected board of trustees and hires administrators and teachers. The Province provides about half of the funding for the operation of schools; the remainder is raised by local property taxes and, for public boards, commercial taxation. Chief Executive Officers are responsible both to the local board and to the Provincial authorities, a situation which can result in a certain amount of tension on controversial issues.

Controversy has been part of the history of separate schools in Ontario since before the provinces combined into the confederation which is Canada today. According to Maurice Careless (Globe and Mail, 1986a), unpopular political deals marked the history of Roman Catholic schools in Ontario. Laws had been imposed unwillingly by action of the Parliament of the United Provinces in 1841. In 1850, a law was passed providing Catholics with "freedom from insult." The current separate school system in Ontario was instituted in 1863 through various parliamentary maneuverings. It never would have been approved with a straight vote. In the 20th century, the Catholics pressed

continually for additional funding. In a landmark case in 1928 (Tiny Township), the courts interpreted the Constitution (The British North America Act) as limiting funding for separate schools through the primary grades. (Sissons, 1959) In the 1960's this was extended to Grades 9 and 10. In 1936, an effort was made by the government to extend the tax base for separate schools but it failed. There was a suggestion the Globe and Mail that Casa Loma[5] would become the North American residence of the Pope if full funding were extended to separate schools. On October 25, 1970, 17,000 students from separate schools jammed Maple Leaf Gardens[6] to appeal for full funding. Mr. Davis, then Minister of Education, but running for the leadership, refused, indicating that he did not wish further Balkanization of the school system.

However dramatic the announcement of full funding was in 1984, it was not an isolated incident in the long and stormy history of Catholic schools in Ontario. Since it was, however, an action in which two primary conflicting values held by different groups of people were exposed, it was a climactic change rather than an incremental one.

Actions and Reactions

Following the DAvis announcement in 1984, there were a series of actions and reactions, concentrated in 1984 and 1985 but erupting again in later years, even into 1990.

Circling the Wagons

Included in the announcement by the Premier was the creation of three commissions, one to examine financing issues connected with the initiative, one to examine issues involving the funding of private schools other than Roman Catholic schools, and one, the Planning and Implementation Commission (PIC), to ensure a smooth implementation of the funding policy. PIC became the initial vehicle by which the government attempted to handle the strong reaction to the initiative, a protective buffer for the politicians who had not anticipated the extraordinary reaction of the public, both Catholic and non-Catholic, to the policy.

5. Casa Loma is a castle constructed in the 19th Century in downtown Toronto. It is a local landmark.

6. An indoor sports arena in Toronto.

PIC took a long time to get organized. A respected educator, William T. Newnham, former president of Seneca College in Toronto (a large two year community college) with prior experience in the public schools, was appointed chair. Fortunately, Newnham was an extremely calm person, hard to ruffle, fortunate because there was continual controversy and publicity. In September, for example, the Globe and Mail reported (1984b) that a Catholic member of the Commission was forced to resign because it came to light that he was still an elected trustee of a separate board, and the government policy was not to appoint sitting trustees. Eventually, the proper mix of Catholics and non-Catholics was found, and the Commission work began in earnest. Its members received a stipend of $250 per day plus expenses, and they were on the job many days. The Commission, in the way of Commissions, decided to hold hearings around the Province, to begin in the fall.

During the summer, various interest groups began to sort out their positions, and the issues over which the "war" would be waged began to be articulated.

Among the first and most strident groups to enter the fray was the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (OSSTF), a large and wealthy teachers' union. As early as June 13, the head of OSSTF was quoted in the papers as questioning whether public support could be given to an institution which had restricted access (Globe and Mail, 1984c). The Catholic Teachers Association (OECTA) was not far behind. An article on July quoted OECTA officials as stating that the cost estimates were too low, and that it would take at least twice the money to implement the policy (and they were proved right as will be documented later in this paper). The school trustee organization (The Ontario School Trustees Council) and the administrators' organization (The Ontario Association of Education Administrative Officials), both with public school and separate school members, strove to establish positions encompassing both points of view. Both failed, and by 1989 the two organizations, for all intents and purposes, had ceased operations.

The Catholic establishment was excited. Cardinal Emmet Carter, Archbishop of Toronto, was quoted on June 13 as saying, "I admire the fairness of the Government" (Globe and Mail, 1984d). But a headline on June 14 from the opposition indicated how the lines were forming: **ORANGE LEADER CHARGES BETRAYAL.** (Globe and Mail, 1984 e).

Clarification and Smokescreens

The original Davis plan was to delay the start of funding until the fall of 1985. Later events, and delays in passing the legislation meant that it was the fall of 1986 before interim funding arrangements were in effect.

Following the initial jockeying for position, there was a fairly long period of policy clarification on the one hand, while on the other hand it was a period for launching smokescreens as interest groups attempted to block and delay the implementation of the policy.

Among the salient issues emerging during this period was the question of whether non-Catholic teachers who became redundant because of the transfer of students from public high schools to new Catholic high schools would be hired by the separate boards. While Cardinal Carter was arguing in public at least for accommodation and cooperation, the Catholic Bishops took a harder line, stating that Catholic teachers should teaching in Catholic schools and that the number of non-Catholics would be strictly limited.

This position elicited a strong reaction from unions representing public school teachers. Malcolm Buchanan, the head of OSSTF, was quoted as saying that "Ontario Roman CAtholic bishops are being mean-spirited and are sowing the seeds of religious division" (Globe and Mail, 1984f). A group of twenty public school chief executive officers sent an open letter to the Provincial government urging that access to Catholic schools should be open to public school teachers who wanted to transfer and that their tenure and promotion status should be affected. (Globe and Mail, 1984g). To the writer's knowledge, it was the first time in history that twenty chief executive officers in Ontario had ever agreed on anything.

During 1984 and 1985, there were wild estimates of the impact of the proposed legislation on teaching jobs, ranging anywhere from 10,000 public school jobs lost to no real impact. No one knew how many high school students in public schools would switch to separate schools. No one could have known the impact of the legislation.

An issue related to the transfer of teachers was whether non Catholic students would be admitted to Catholic high schools if they so desired. Separate school educators and religious leaders were in a difficult position on this issue because tax supported funds

from the Provincial level came from both Catholic and non-Catholic ratepayers. Limited access created a policy paradox. On the one hand, it was argued, public institutions should be open to all. On the other hand, the whole reason for Catholic schools was to promote "Catholicity." Arguments went back and forth on the issue.

In general, the position of the separate school boards developed to a point that most agreed to take a certain percentage of non-Catholic students so long as there was room. Non-Catholic students, however, would have to participate in the "Christ centered program" (Globe and Mail, 1984h). Later events indicate that the furor over the issue of student placement was not really relevant. It was a kind of smokescreen by opponents of the funding policy to trap the opposition in an awkward argument.

All factions agreed that funding was an issue. At least interest groups used funding and anticipated funding problems to argue for or against the extension of funding. Catholic groups argued that additional funds were necessary to offset the costs of opening new secondary schools. Public school groups argued for compensation for lost revenue because of departing students on the grounds that they still would have to pay teachers and maintain complex physical plants. There was fear also that the government would not provide funds as promised. Other religious groups, Jewish educators and alternative school proponents, argued for their share of the funding. The Commission on Finance proceeded slowly with its hearings and its deliberations. In some ways, its slow progress diffused much of the concern, or rather made it difficult for either side to use financial arguments as a basis for favouring or opposing the government action. Its final report in December 1985 (Report of Commission on Finance, 1985) was something of an anti-climax. While it recommended a number of fairly radical changes in the way education was financed in the Province, it stayed quite clear of the issues directly involving the implementation of full funding.

Legal Counter Attacks

As early as June 1984, the OSSTF was considering a court challenge to the funding initiative, basing its case on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, arguing that Catholic teachers were being given preference for jobs (Globe and Mail, 1984k) Public school supporters found, after some time arguing around issues such as those described in

the previous section, that their best hope for redress of the government action was the legal route, and legal avenues were pursued right up to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Major figures and organizations became involved in the legal battles. The public school Federations, with their huge memberships, forged an alliance with the Metropolitan Toronto School Board, the coordinating board for the five school systems in Metropolitan Toronto, and its budget of more than $1 billion dollars per year. By October of 1985, J.J. Robinette, one of the major advocates in Canadian law, had been retained by the Metropolitan School Board to argue the case before tribunals and courts.

A key precedent in the case was the Tiny Township case of 1928 in which separate school trustees had asked the provincial court to permit the board to operate a high school and to collect taxes to pay for the operation. The Supreme Court of Canada, and later the Privy Council of the British Parliament (Canada did not have its own constitution in 1928), dismissed the case, effectively limiting public support to the grade 10 level, and limiting the tax capability of separate boards to residential property. Robinette predicted legal chaos if the precedent established by Tiny Township were overturned (Globe and Mail, 1985a).

As a result of the court challenges, and the growing pressure from the public boards, the Government delayed the implementation of funding from the fall of 1985 to 1986. In the meantime, interim grants were to be provided to assist separate boards in the necessary planning for high school programs. By December 9, however, the court had blocked the interim grants, and the judge involved spoke sternly to both the separate school boards and to the then Minister of Education, Sean Conway, for assuming too much authority outside of the law. Finally, on Feb. 19, 1986, the Ontario Court of Appeals, by a 3-2 vote, held that the financing of separate schools through the end of high school was constitutional. The Tiny Township case had not been overturned, however. The Court held that the decision in 1928 had implied support for whatever school arrangements were common, i.e. high school attendance in 1985 was a common path for the majority of students.

Undaunted, the Metropolitan Board vowed to pursue the case to the Supreme Court of Canada. Over a period of many months legal accusations were hurled back and forth; the case finally reached the Supreme Court. The papers reported the proceedings at length, in particular noting that 13 lawyers were involved in the courtroom and that Mr.

Robinette was at his dignified best. To no avail. By February 6, 1987, the Court had reserved judgment, in effect allowing the funding of separate schools in Ontario to proceed. Individual rights were not seen as being violated (Globe and Mail, 1987a).

Shifting Scenarios

The fourth phase was one marked by political realignments, negotiations and the purchasing of quiescence. Proponents and advocates of full funding struggled to contain government action.

Political parties found themselves with a shared dilemma. In 1971, Mr. Davis had as a major plank in his platform for leadership of the party the denial of full funding for separate schools. His selection as leader, and his ascension to the premiership, was based in part on that position. Now, in 1984, he had reversed his position, just as he was getting ready to retire from office. His political colleagues were momentarily at a loss. The Conservatives had to do some fast rationalization in order to suddenly support full funding. The other parties had traditionally supported funding, but they were faced with the problem that on this really major issue all three parties were agreed. The outcry from the public, from the voters, from the constituencies signalled that something was wrong. This was not going to be a "motherhood" issue.

Meanwhile, the government had changed. For the first time in forty-two years, the Conservatives were out of power and the Liberals were in. At first, it was a minority situation, but by 1986 the Liberals held a majority. It made no difference on the funding issue. So the politicians did the political thing. They referred the matter to a Select Committee and the Committee held hearings.

The problem for the politicians was illustrated by an incident which happened to Frank Miller, Mr. Davis' ill-fated successor as leader of the Conservatives and for a few months as premier. On May 1, 1985, the day before the election at which the Conservatives lost their majority, Mr. Miller was campaigning in North Bay, close to his home riding. Mr. Davis was accompanying. Fifty teachers paraded outside of the meeting bearing signs labeling Mr. Miller as a fascist. A page 1 headline in the Globe and Mail read: **MILLER CALLED FASCIST AND HITLER BY RC SCHOOL FINANCING PROTESTERS** (Globe and Mail, 1985b). The same

article reported that "a red faced Mr. Davis clenched his pipe between his teeth and said nothing."

What was notable after the election, however, was that all parties avoided discussing the issue. It was referred to the Select Committee; meanwhile, the rhetoric and the rigid positions of partisans on both sides hardened. Eventually, all parties agreed to pass the Bill , Bill 30, and it was finally approved, following court delays, in early 1986.

On another front, the work of PIC was proceeding quite effectively. It conducted extensive hearings, and traveled all over the Province at considerable expense to the ratepayers. Apart from the hearings, which were often stormy and heated, the Commission called for the submission of plans from the separate boards which were moving to extend their high school programs. The regulations required the separate boards to consult with the public boards about teachers, pupil, and building transfers. PIC indicated that it would require that consultation, a painful procedure in jurisdictions where tempers were flaring.

There were 174 communities in the Province which only had sufficient population to support one high school, according to PIC, and the Commission indicated that in these communities the two boards would have to cooperate somehow or other. At any rate, many boards submitted appropriate plans, and it was evident by the fall of 1985 that in many places cooler heads were prevailing, at least at the local level.

Several trouble spots remained, notably the Hamilton region, North Bay, and Sudbury, all urban centres. And there were plenty of rumblings beneath the surface. The most persistent concern, as school systems moved into full funding, was the transfer of facilities. A major confrontation occurred in Metropolitan Toronto where the separate school board was desperate to obtain facilities. Extensive negotiations were carried out, and finally, with the help of a mediator, an agreement was reached. Six high schools were transferred to the separate board in return for a promise from that board that no more requests would be forthcoming in the future.

The issue of transfer of facilities, however, continued to arise on a regular basis in systems around the Province. With legal efforts stalling, and eventually failing, the public supporters at the grass roots level turned to these issues as the main focus of battle.

To quiet the clamour related to funding and financing, the government gave out money. It was an attempt to choke the problem with dollars. In 1985, it allocated an extra $34 million to separate boards as interim grants to speed implementation (Globe and Mail, 1985c). Public Boards also received extra funds to compensate for reduced grants as a result of students moving to the separate boards. After two years of effort by the government, on June 24, 1986, the final version of the funding bill passed in the legislature with only one dissenting vote. It was estimated by critics that the cost of the whole affair had been $120 million, considerably more than the $40 million originally suggested by Mr. Davis.

The Select Committee did its part to diffuse the anger of the constituents by conducting hearings with great dignity and an unusual show of statesmanship. Of course, given that all three parties supported the initiative, it was somewhat easier to avoid the traditional "gutter" politics that often characrterised the behaviour of elected officials. One of the dramatic events of the hearings was the appearance of Mr. Davis in October of 1985 to explain his about face. His argument was that he had always favored support, that he didn't think the time was right in 1971, and that he wanted to leave office with a clear conscience. He was not seriously challenged on his statements; his appearance was interpreted by the press as theatre played by a master politician and an elder statesman. He rose to the occasion with a masterful vintage Davis performance. No one in the history of Ontario politics has been better at give and take in meetings and public forums than William G. Davis.

An Uneasy Interregnum

Following the passage of Bill 30 in June of 1986, there followed an uneasy period, lasting until the present time. On the surface, events were moving smoothly. The legal battles were being played out. The separate schools were gearing up for "completion" and by 1987 many districts were running full programs through to the end of high school. The public school supporters, in a sense, were going underground. But

occasionally something would occur above the surface. A series of headlines in the Globe and Mail give a flavour of these eruptions:

RC SCHOOL ISSUE ABLAZE AGAIN (1987b)

HAMILTON TEENS PROTEST (1988b)

RC FINANCING FORM OF APARTHEID, TEACHERS SAY (1988b)

PEEL BOARD TO HIRE ONLY PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPPORTERS (1988c)

PUBLIC BOARDS SEETHE AS RC'S GET MOST FUNDS (1988d)

At the same time, private school representatives were becoming more vocal, as they sought the same treatment accorded to separate schools. The one man private school commission had been headed by Bernard J. Shapiro, Director of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. His report, essentially, called for public support of alternative schools, with strings attached. In a strange twist of fate, Dr. Shapiro, in March of 1986, was appointed Deputy Minister of Education. Ironically, therefore, he was in a position to act on his own recommendations. To this date, however, despite some organized efforts, no action has been taken, and private schools are not yet supported by public funds in any substantive way. One factor may be that the elite private schools, such as Upper Canada College, indicated in response to the Shapiro Report that they were not interested in public funding if there were any strings attached.

The Actors

Some understanding of the events just described is gained by examining various actors involved. I take as actors both groups of individuals and individuals. A brief discussion of these actors follows.

The Teachers

At the provincial level, teachers in Ontario (there are about 100,000 teachers in the Province) belong to five separate organizations representing various interests among the members. There is a coordinating organization, the Ontario Teachers Federation, but the power of the unions is not lodged with that organization. The teachers have worked together fairly well on many issues in the past, most notably salary issues Curiously, though, on separate school funding there was not much concerted action. The main actors were the secondary school teachers as might be expected because of the potential loss of members to the Catholic organization. initially they were strident and wounded. They expended considerable funds, calling for a blocking of the new policy, and they joined the Metropolitan Toronto Board in the legal efforts.

In hindsight, however, the furor seems more like sound and fury than substance. The great fears about job losses have not occurred, and the transfer procedures have generally worked reasonably well at the grass root levels. For once, on a major issue, the teacher unions did not exhibit much influence.

This is not to count teachers out, however. A recent development, to be discussed later, has found the public teachers joining with public trustees and probably public administrators in a potentially strong lobby effort. A mirror organization has been formed among the Catholic interest groups.

The Trustees

At the provincial level, there are five separate trustee organizations with a coordinating organization, a mirror image of the teacher organizations. The coordinating organization, the Ontario School Trustees Council, had been buffeted in recent years because of the inability of the constituent members to agree on much of anything. The two big points of division in the history of the organization were language and religion, overlaid with concerns by the large school boards that the greater number of small boards could and did outvote them on many occasions.

The extension of funding to separate schools has signalled the end, in effect, for the Ontario School Trustees Council, and for united efforts among all trustees in the

Province. Representatives of the public boards and the separate boards on the Council have been so polarized that no agreement can be reached on such major issues as authorizing operating funds for the Council. The Council now struggles along with one employee, from a high of fifteen or twenty it employed fifteen years ago.

As a direct result of the funding initiative, a new trustee organization has been formed , an organization composed of trustees from all public boards. This organization is faced with enormous internal problems, but it is firm in its resolve to represent the public school point of view to the government and to the citizens of the Province. At the same time, the Ontario Separate School Trustees Associations (OSSTA) has gained enormous stature and credibility. It has grown in size. It has developed its in-service operation to meet the needs of new boards just beginning to operate secondary schools, and it has been a major focal point for teachers, administrators and trustees from the separate boards as they seek to capitalize on the realization of their dreams of more than a hundred years.

At workshops for trustees and administrators of separate boards in the past three years, there is a sense of vitality. Catholic educators are stepping more lively; they are animated; there is sparkle in the eye where in the past a kind of morbid defeatism had marked their demeanor, an acceptance that they were really second class citizens in the educational world.

The Administrators

The senior administrators of the Province, the supervisory officers, have played a fairly significant but unobserved role in the events since 1984. At the provincial level, they appeared to be somewhat less divided than their trustee and teacher counterparts, although their organization (OAEAO) had a large majority of public school members. Only a relatively few Catholic administrators belonged and were active. Prior to 1984, the Catholic supervisory officers had an organization but it was not particularly well organized and it did not perform really as an interest group.

Ontario supervisory officers, while they had embraced the progressive child-centered philosophy of the Hall-Dennis report of the late 60's, are at heart an extremely conservative and establishment oriented group. They are protective of the way schools are currently run. They are also in-bred, with an iron fisted certification policy and an

informal set of career pattern norms which prevent anyone from outside of Ontario or anyone who has not served a socializing apprenticeship from gaining a position of responsibility.

John W. Boich, the Executive Director of the OAEAO, recognized immediately the threat posed to his organization by the government initiative. Even in the best of times, he had trouble holding a significant percentage of separate school members in OAEAO. But he had been consistent in insisting that OAEAO represented all of the supervisory officers of the province. He moved quickly to form a representative task force to develop a position paper for OAEAO. His dilemma was that most of his members were public school people, but the organization was accountable to both public school people and separate school people. He opted to push for a middle-of-the road position.

Boich mounted a major effort. Many meetings were held, and extreme care was exercised in approving the draft of the position paper. The paper tread a thin line in attempting to encompass the interests of both camps. Published with great fanfare, it failed totally. It failed by definition, almost, because it attempted to reconcile two conflicting primary value systems. For OAEAO, it was downhill from that point.

OAEAO's problems were confounded by some internal management concerns which rendered it somewhat less than effective and which cost it credibility even among its strong supporters. By 1986, a new administrative task force within the organization was formed to try to salvage a provincial presence for administrators. It too failed, although vestiges of its deliberations survived in the form of fairly regular meetings between representatives of public and separate school organizations.

In the end, public school supervisory officers banded together to form a new organization. This organization, the Ontario Public Supervisory Officers Association (OPSOA) has established a strong foothold among public school administrators with about 450 members out of a possible 550.[7] The separate school officials, in the meantime, have bolstered their own organization, the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers Association (OCSOA) with increased dues and a recommendation for a part time executive director. In the meantime, John Boich has retired, proud of his efforts to keep the organization together, chagrined that it was not possible.

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[7]. Based on discussions with L. Budden, President of OPSOA.

Politicians

The dominant individual actor in the whole business relative to separate school funding was without a doubt William G. Davis, Minister of Education from 1962 to 1971 and premier of the Province until 1984. Davis, perhaps, is the single most influential politician relative to education in the history of the Province. He presided over the expansionist period in Ontario during the 1960's; he was involved in the creation of the community college system in Ontario in the 60's, the establishment of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in 1965, the development of the Hall-Dennis report in the late 60's, and the reorganization of Ontario school boards into larger units of administration in 1969. The number of school boards went from 1500 in 1968 to approximately 175 in 1969.

While the period of the 60's and 70's in education was certainly one of consultation, cooperation, and consensus decision-making, Davis operated in exactly the opposite way. He had advisors, who became known as the "fat cats," but he tended to proceed without wide consultation. His stock response when called to task for not having consulted widely was that the views of the significant interest groups were already well known.

The problem Davis had to deal with, after his announcement in 1984, was that he had been strongly opposed to full funding in 1971 when he was running for the premier's position. Davis had the wisdom, or intuition at least, to retire from active politics very shortly after making the announcement in 1984, leaving his successors to take the brunt of the succeeding battles. A man with a great sense of timing during his distinguished career, Davis certainly protected himself at the end.

Of particular interest for this discussion, however, is the clear evidence that major educational change can be imposed from the center without general consensus, if there is sufficient power. Davis had the power. But he was on a thin line. His sense of timing almost betrayed him, and the backlash caused the fall of his government and the ending of the careers of a number of his political and professional associates.

Davis was followed by a long time party workhorse, Frank Miller, who never seemed to have control of the office or the issues. He presided over the first defeat by the

Tories in forty-two years and retired from active politics, returning to his used car dealership in Bracebridge, Ontario, a small town in the resort area north of Toronto.

The new Liberal government was headed by David Peterson, the present premier. Immediately on assuming office he vowed to see the legislation through the Legislature, and to ensure that funding was extended. He left most of the political infighting over this issue to his lieutenants in the cabinet and to the civil servants. The main struggle, of course, was not from within the legislature since all parties were on record as favouring the funding initiative, but rather from external interest groups, especially public school supporters.

At the cabinet level, the strongest Minister of Education since Davis himself held the post was in office in June of 1984, Dr. Bette Stephenson. Until this initiative, Davis had stayed away from educational policy, at least for public consumption, hardly ever commenting except in the most general way. The separate school funding issue, however, seems to have come directly from Davis, with some question as to whether he consulted at all with either Stephenson or the Ministry. Opponents of the policy were quick to criticize Stevenson, claiming she had been left out of any consultation, and that the premier had proceeded in a dictatorial manner. Her responses were angry, but not really definitive. Never one to take a back seat, she seemed to be in a difficult position. Several times she lashed out at the media. "You are contemptuous, carping, paranoid, malignant, malevolent, distorted, and editorializing." (Globe and Mail, 1984j) Dr. Stephenson left the scene in the fall of 1984, retiring from politics after a long and distinguished career.

She was succeeded in quick order by Keith Norton and then by Larry Grossman, a major figure in the Conservative party and the man who succeeded Frank Miller as leader. Grossman tried to assume a high profile on other issues, but the separate school funding issue tended to push other matters into the background during his short term as minister.

The first Liberal minister was Sean Conway, a young and able legislator. By 1986, the issue had becomes so volatile that the politicians were backing off, leaving the battles to be fought in the Commissions and in the various committees formed to deal with problems.

At one point, Mr. Grossman summed up what most of the politicians must have been thinking. He said that he had never anticipated the reaction to the announcement by Mr. Davis and probably if it were to be done over he would advise against it.

Religious Leaders

As might be expected the Catholic hierarchy played a high profile role in the exchanges. Against this hierarchy, the Anglican clergy, in particular the Anglican primate, Archbishop Lewis Garnsworthy, fueled the fires in some unusual ways.

The role of the Catholic hierarchy is not entirely clear. Cardinal Emmett Carter was a personal friend of Premier Davis, but he denied any direct pressure in the situation. The media reported that government officials met with Catholic bishops several weeks before the June 12 announcement, but other accusations of pressure from the hierarchy on the government have not been substantiated. Claire Hoy, a conservative Toronto Sun columnist, published a book (Hoy,1985) in which he claimed that Davis had promised Carter to sponsor full funding by the time he left office. These are the men, Hoy trumpeted in the newspaper, who "play politics on God's behalf" (Globe and Mail, 1985e)

Cardinal Carter, while certainly joyful at the turn of events, adopted a conciliatory stance, urging cooperation and moderation. His bishops, however, were a different matter. A series of headlines tells the story:

HOLD NON CATHOLICS TO 10% OF FACULTY, BISHOPS TELL TRUSTEES (Globe and Mail, 1985f)

BISHOPS REJOIN BATTLE (Globe and Mail, 1986b))

FREEDOM GONE AMOK (Globe and Mail, 1985g)

On the other side of the issue stood an unusual character, Archbishop Lewis Garnsworthy. In April 1985, Garnsworthy, in a press conference, made the following statement: "This whole process was done by decree. It's the way Hitler made decrees in

the Reichstag--this (the separate school funding action) was done without legislation, in a twelve minute speech" (Globe and Mail, 1985h). The Globe and Mail headline read **ARCHBISHOP LIKENS DAVIS TO HITLER.** Garnsworthy persisted in this line of attack amidst a storm of protest over the succeeding months and years. In August of 1985, a headline ran **ANGLICAN CLERIC RENEWS ATTACK ON PLAN** (Globe and Mail, 1985i). His colleagues were shocked at his style, but they tended to support his position, that is the position that this action was done without full consultation, without due process, unilaterally, and in a dictatorial fashion. In fact, it seems that Garnsworthy had wide support, although not support that was publicly expressed all that often. Certainly, his stance was a factor in the Tory defeat in 1985. At a public school trustee convention in June of 1985, Garnsworthy received a standing ovation following a half hour presentation (Globe and Mail, 1985j). The writer was present at that meeting and can attest to the electricity generated in the large gathering of trustees who felt betrayed and totally frustrated by the events of the preceding year. For those involved in the events of these years, the image of a high profile religious leader accusing the premier of the Province of being a fascist and engaging in Hitler-like behaviour is indelibly etched in the mind.[8]

From the Community

One unusual aspect of the situation is that, once they realized the complexity and explosive nature of the issues, the politicians raced among themselves to see who could get the farthest from the fray. The community, more than in most educational issues, would not let them get away. In particular, in the later scenarios when the transfer of school buildings became salient, community interest became intense. Various polls were taken over the period of several years showing the general population fairly well split over whether public funds should support Catholic education. A poll in 1985 showed 45% opposed, 42% in favour and 13% undecided (Globe and Mail, 1985k). The irony, of course, is that all three political parties supported the initiative, and thus a golden opportunity for the opposition was lost. There must have been some gnashing of teeth over the situation by political opportunists.

[8] Bishop Garnsworthy passed away early in 1990. Obituaries made note of his activities during the funding controvery.

Other groups made attempts to take advantage of the new policy. A story in the paper was headlined **GREEKS CONSIDERING OWN SCHOOL SYSTEM** (Globe and Mail, 1986c)

Women's groups were concerned that laid-off teachers would be mostly women. Francophone leaders were concerned that resources would be turned away from the provision of French education in the Province. Jewish leaders wanted support for Jewish schools. And so on.

Reflections

In thinking about the meaning of the events and actions described in this paper, we must be aware that only the tip of the iceberg has been available for examination. The hidden part of the story, that is the part of the story that occurred in the back rooms, in small private meetings, in one on one contact, remains to be exposed. Thus any generalizations are limited at this stage.

A Clash of Values

An appropriate lens for looking at this policy change is in terms of a clash of values, a conflict of principle versus consensus. In a sense, the issue is not educational but religious, or at least it is a combination, and in Canada and the United States today the combination of religion, politics and education is a potent and explosive one. Current furor over abortion, and over Aids, and related issues are other examples of the same thing. The other similar Canadian issue is language, i.e. issues surrounding the official bi-lingual policy of the country which touches at some fundamental values held by Canadians.

What seems clear is that the more rational models for change such as those proposed and described by Fullan (1982)are not particularly appropriate when deep seated value conflicts of a fundamental nature are in play. The action is political. More importantly, individuals and groups of individuals define for themselves what the world should look like and what the educational system should look like. In this way we can understand the extreme reaction of a respected public figure such as Archbishop Garnsworthy. A fundamental value of his, involving religion and the education of the

young, was challenged. His reaction, and the feelings of his followers, both declared and undeclared, was the reaction of one willing to risk all for what is believed.

The same commitment to principle was true on the Catholic side. The passion of the Catholic partisans is reflected in this comment by a former Catholic bishop, Philip Pocock. " A Catholic school is one in which God, His truth, His life, are integrated into the entire syllabus, curriculum and life of the school."(Globe and Mail, June 14, 1985, M5). The notion of Catholicity is embodied in that statement, and it reflects a primary belief held by a large segment of Ontario society.

On both sides, therefore, a fundamental value, or metavalue in Hodgkinson's terms (1983), was challenged. When the legitimacy of a fundamental value is called to question, people become fearful and angry, as if the very basis of their understanding of the world and society is in danger of destruction.

A question which can raised in this kind of discussion is whether incremental change, i.e. change which nudges a system in the direction on which consensus has already been reached is change at all. Certainly that sort of change is of a different order than the one described here, and it calls for a different sort of analysis, and a different sort of implementation strategy.

Structure and Administration

At the provincial level, at least to this point, the move to extend funding of separate schools has had a profound impact. The long standing power alignment among various interests in the teacher organizations, the trustee organizations and the administrator organizations has been dramatically altered. And it has been altered at considerable cost to the political and professional functions of these professional groups. By costs, we refer to the resources, both human and physical, used to bring about internal re-organization, thus diverting efforts from broader professional concerns about education in the Province.

What seems to be in store over the next five to ten years is a period of political and organizational fragmentation or balkanization. In particular, the trustees and the administrators are in a state of disarray at the Provincial level, and the energies of Provincial interest group leaders are directed inward in an attempt to survive. The result

is a a kind of power vacuum where there had been a delicate balance in the past between the three major arms, teachers, trustees and administrators. What will this vacuum attract?

Certainly the government has a chance to solidify its already strong central control over educational governance, and perhaps this is what the general public would like. Local control may be a model no longer appropriate where there is so much value conflict. Or maybe local control was a myth anyway.

What appears to be happening is the emergence of some new single interest and tentative coalitions. In both the Catholic and public camps, at the Provincial level, teachers, trustees and administrators have banded together to fight for specific issues, i.e. modification of the tax laws to allow Catholic schools access to the industrial tax base. It is conceivable that these two organizations will become institutionalized and will become the basis for a new balance of power. The traditional animosities among the groups forming these coalitions is so strong, however, that a long term liaison does not seem to be much of a possibility in the mind of the writer. The happy family model which seems characteristic of Saskatechewan, for example, has little change in Ontario.[9] The weight of history is too strong.

At the local school board level, some difficult problems are on the horizon from an administrative point of view. Catholic administrators are having to educate themselves quickly about secondary education and the provision of comprehensive programs. In the past, the private high schools in the Catholic system were essentially university preparatory institutions. Now, suddenly, the separate boards have to accommodate the range of students. This means vocational programs, expensive special education programs, and comprehensive high schools.

On the public school side, the challenge in terms of program and facilities is not so dramatic. Whereas public schools had perceived themselves to be the "real" public schools for a hundred years, they now had to accommodate to the notion of a separate and really equal status for Catholic schools. In the smaller more remote jurisdictions in particular, some new ways of cooperation would have to be invented, in spite of the organizational fragmentation at the Provincial level. The specter of two half full high

9. See chapter in this volume by L. Sackney.

schools across the street from each other, one Catholic, one public, is too rich a scenario, even for wealthy Ontario.

One interesting outcome already evident, is a definite move on the part of both public and separate systems toward marketing. School boards have adopted slogans and catchy logos. There are theatre style marquees in front of board offices. Pens, pins, and glossy print materials are available in most school boards. In East York,[10] the seats at bus stops carry messages about public education . School boards buy time in the media to advertise for students.

In the worst case scenario, school boards could degenerate into advertising agencies, entities whose main purpose is to gather as many students as possible in order to maximize the grant money from the government, and to appease the sense of injury of their members and employees. In the best case scenario, however, the element of competitiveness and pride with two alternative systems available for many students will push both separate and public boards into better delivery programs and toward genuine excellence.

The Schools Are Open

Every fall since 1984, the schools have opened . Nearly every school aged child in the Province who wants to be in school has been in school. Teachers have taught. Administrators have administered. And politicians have talked. Has there there been any impact on individual children from the structural changes imposed by the extension of funding to separate school boards?

This is an empirical question that will have to examined in the future. Also, there are many associated value questions. In terms of tolerance, would there be a different attitude toward religion and religious education if we had one secondary system for all students as opposed to two parallel systems? Is it positive to have two separate value systems developed in two different groups of children? Or should we move toward a common value system? Has the constitutional question really been resolved. That is, is it fair and democratic to restrict access to a publicly funded institution?

A multitude of interesting issues will emerge in the future.

In the meantime, in Ontario there are now two separate parallel educational

[10]. A school board within the Metropolitan Toronto system.

systems for children through high school, publicly funded whereas before June 12, 1984 there was only one at the high school level. The shift, while part of a long term historical pattern in one sense, was not brought about by the exercise of democratic procedures, by consensus or collaboration. Rather it was the result of the exerecise of power by a leader who believed in the move and who had the power to make it come about. Not many leaders have such a chance.

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